

REVD EMMA SYKES – ELECTION ADDRESS



I am standing for election to General Synod as I have a broad range of experience that enables me to represent our Diocese, with the range of opinions and traditions in, I hope, a fair and balanced way. The recent debates around LLF have been painful for many from all perspectives. At times they have led to ‘tribalism’ and othering one another in a way that reflects a poor image of Christ to the world and have overshadowed other important and urgent issues such as the increasing gap between rich and poor, climate change and racial justice. These issues that many of us face on a regular basis in our rich and diverse city, give us a particular insight that has much to contribute to the national church.

I have varied experience in both charitable sector and ministry both lay and ordained. I have worked most of my life in and around the Birmingham area in the urban and rural parts, beginning as a support worker in hostels for young homeless and as a co-ordinator for the West Midlands part of Birmingham Youth Parliament. During this time, I was a lay pastoral worker and then went on to do youth ministry at St Michael’s church in Boldmere. I was ordained in 2007 and since then have ministered in a variety of contexts, the City Centre (St Martin in the Bull Ring), suburban (St Michael’s, Boldmere as an SSM focused on mission) and inner urban (currently as the Vicar of St Barnabas Erdington and Oversight Minister for the Erdington area). Alongside this, I am a Bishop’s Advisor for National Discernment Panels, I have been an assistant DDO, chair of the Mission Apprentice scheme, a member of the Malawian Task Group (I have been to Malawi on 3 occasions and led a leadership course with the clergy of Lake Diocese) and worked part time for CPAS as a leadership specialist. My experience means I am aware of the many different challenges in ministry as well as being able to work across a broad

range of traditions. I came to faith in an evangelical charismatic tradition and now draw on Ignatian spirituality and minister in a modern catholic context.

I believe it is important to be transparent and so would make it clear that I would support a change towards same sex marriage and the full inclusion of LGBTI+ people in the life of the church. However, I also recognise and respect those who with all good conscience hold to a different perspective and so believe that appropriate protections should be put in place to allow all traditions to find space within the church. A wise spiritual director once said to me “it takes the whole of the world to know the whole of God” and therefore I would want to advocate strongly for those voices on the margins that are often overlooked and unheard. I believe in the radical love of God, that values every human being and in Jesus Christ who transcends human made barriers and in the infinite power of the holy spirit who equips us with the grace and compassion to work for unity and the flourishing of all.

Please prayerfully consider what I have offered and give me your first or high preference vote if you believe that what I have shared in this statement can best represent C of E Birmingham, along with others, at General Synod.